

Epaphras 2

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[0 : 00] Welcome. Thank you for listening to this wholesome word by David Entry. The words you catch will change your world. May your story change from this message. Be blessed.

Colossians chapter 1, verse 1 to 11. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and Timothaius, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colossae, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, wherein ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit as it does also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.

Verse 7, As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow servants, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

For this cause, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthening with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and suffering, with joyfulness, here ends the reading of God's holy word.

[2 : 05] Amen. Amen. Amen. Colossians is such a great book in the Bible, that every New Testament saint must desire to grow in the Lord, knowing Colossians.

Every bit of the Bible is meat for a believer's nourishment. So those who normally will hide the Bible under their pillow to guarantee good dreams, just in case you end up having good dreams.

It might be because of your faith in the Lord, but the Bible itself does not guarantee good dreams as a book. You must read it.

It said that, blessed is he who reads it. So you must read it, and then apply it, and then it becomes the source of un...

Yeah, blessed is he that reader. Yeah, it becomes the source of undeniable blessings, uncontested blessings. I believe God is just about to show his blessings in your life because God delights in settling certain issues or in making clear what he can do, who he is.

[3 : 27] And sometimes he will use your life to make a statement. He will use your life to make a statement, undeniable statement, that he is actually a God who is, and he blesses.

I see God blessing you in Jesus' name. So every bit of the Bible is necessary for the believer's nourishment. But every book has its central focus and motive.

So the book of Colossians, as I told you, its motive is to make sure that the believers get to understand the deity of Christ.

One, and the fact that Christ is God. And then number two, that Christ alone is enough. So that's why in these times, believers must really familiarize themselves with Colossians.

And we heard about how after bringing his salutation, he commended their faith in the Lord, their love for the saints, and their hope that is laid down up for them.

[4 : 36] And the fact that the gospel bears fruits everywhere and in their lives as well. And then he went on to talk about, as he have learned of verse 7, as he also learned from Epaphras.

And last week, I told you about some points about Epaphras. What did I say? How many did I give you? And how many was left?

Four. Four. I gave you four. So that means I was telling you about eight. Yes. And I gave you four. So eight minus four. Four. Okay. But, you know, I found out that sometimes the shops, they do discounts and sale.

So buy one, get one free. So instead of giving you four extra, I will give you like eight. So first four. Now the second four will still be eight. So we are dealing with eight.

Last week it was eight, but this week it has turned into 12. I think it's a good idea. Because even though we are doing line by line studies on Colossians, sometimes you find out there are things inside what we are studying that we need to pull out.

[6 : 00] And this moment, I'm just, it seems like I'm doing a word study, or a topical, or a word study on Epaphras.

So we are finding a few things about Epaphras because Colossians became Colossians because of Epaphras. The letter was written to them because somebody called Epaphras went to his people and affected them for Christ.

Now when they became affected for Christ, other people now were coming in to infect them. So Epaphras realized that this thing needs apostolic addition.

So one of the, he went to Apostle and Apostle said, no, I need to now write a letter to these people I haven't seen, but they are still the people of God and they are still under my jurisdiction because you are one of mine.

So he sent a letter to Epaphras. So since Epaphras is a key figure in the church in Colossians, we are studying our Colossians, it's good to just know a few things that will make a person, an ordinary one of us, or a person become an Epaphras who can impact a whole community so much that a church, there are churches that were formed in other places, their names are not remembered.

[7 : 31] In fact, there was a church in Herapolis, which was not far from Colossae. And there was another church in Laodicea. But is there any book of Laodicea?

No, there's no, uh, uh, the Laodiceans, like we have Colossians, we have Corinthians, we have Thessalonians. We should have had Laodiceans, but not.

And there's no, um, Herapolis, uh, Herapolisians, or whatever I want to call it. See, it's not in the Bible, so I can't even make the word. But the interesting thing is, actually, Epaphras affected all of those people.

They had those in Herapolis and in Laodicea. But he's originally from Colossae. So, let's look at Epaphras again, because I have a feeling that this generation, these times, we need more Epaphrases.

Yeah. We need more Epaphrases in the body of Christ and in the local churches. So, this message is more for local churches. Epaphrases.

[8 : 34] So, last week, I said, number one, um, things to know about Epaphras. Number one, what's number one? It's one of us. Okay, according to chapter four of Colossians, verse 12.

Number two, what, what, how about Epaphras number two? What is it? We learn. When, when there's an Epaphras around you, you learn from an Epaphras.

You learn from an Epaphras. And you learn good things. For that matter, you learn good things from an Epaphras. Number, number three, what did I say?

He's a fellow servant. He's, Epaphras is, a fellow doulos, a fellow servant, born servant. Actually, he was a fellow prisoner, but he was released early.

So, not just a servant, his service has taken him into prison. His service for God. In Ephesians chapter three, verse one, he says, I, Paul, therefore, the prisoner of Christ, the prisoner, not of Caesar, not of Rome, even though he was Rome.

[9 : 46] He saw himself, this is Christ, not Rome. I'm here because I am a prisoner. So, even if you take me out of prison, me, I'm already in prison in Christ. So, if you don't like the Christ thing, then you might end up killing me because I am a prisoner of Christ.

In other words, this is my Christ walk. I've taken it so far, it has landed me in prison. And the past was also a prisoner. His service has taken him into prison.

Sometimes it doesn't have to be physical prison, but it's put, service for Christ can also put restrictions on you. I had one of Bishop, Doug's bishop, was teaching recently, and he made a comment that I found out, as I think it was very interesting.

He said, the ministry work is so demanding. He said, it's a lot of work, the ministry work. He said, does he understand when you're a pastor, but you have a lot of time?

Because the ministry work is 24-7. 24 hours is not enough. Every time, there is a lot to do. Church work can consume you so much that there are times, the first people who complain is family.

[11 : 00] I'm not talking about husband and wife. If your husband is complaining, he might have a point. If your wife is complaining, especially if they are also spiritual. But if your brother, who doesn't even take church serious?

Most family members who are not serious about Christ tend to have problems with people who are getting very busy with the work of God. Most family members.

And they stay out and they keep criticizing, criticizing, criticizing. because they call you, they don't get you. They don't know. Listen, when your, if your brother or your sister, your relative is a pastor, depending on how serious he is, you might not always get through to them on the phone.

Yeah. I like the way the place is quiet. You might not always get through. And then those of you who want to really do God's work, just brace yourself. There are times, family members will have problems with you, not because you intentionally don't have time, but because the nature of what you have got yourself involved is so much time consuming.

It takes time that you have spare time for everything. Essential things, you have time. You have time. You can talk to other people, talk to mom, talk to dad, talk to my cousin, talk to my neighbor, every now and then.

[12 : 21] But you can't always be available. You, no, you can't. You might not always be available. He said the daily care of the church. So what am I trying to say? What I'm trying to say is that when you are very much involved in the work of God, it can be so demanding.

You might not have time for a lot of things. A lot of things. The bishop went on to say, a pastor will have time to watch every episode of certain things on TV.

A pastor must be very busy on a Sunday especially. And particularly the evenings as well.

Weekdays. Because that's when people are not at work. Your job is working with people.

But when they are at work, that's where you can also do other things. Administrative way. But on Sunday, a pastor must be very busy.

On a Sunday. Pastor, I don't agree. Are you a pastor? Yes, but my father was a pastor. How come we don't know about you? My information, I'm sorry, I know some people who disagree.

[13 : 36] No problem. Look at the kind of work. My information is coming not just from me, from the people I follow. Bishop Dragon Ward Mills. Bishop, these are people with incredible results of great impactful ministries.

When you are in most of those churches, the churches are a big church. There's a lot of marriages that happen in a big church. To have a big church, it requires a big commitment.

You won't be able to live a normal life and have a big church. No, you can't do that. It's incompatible. So, where did we even get to?

Faithful, yeah, it's a bond server. Yeah, a bond, the bond, a bond, bond server. And then, number four is faithful minister of Christ. Faithful. That's why I ended. Number five, let's look at the text again.

Colossians chapter, chapter one, verse seven. As he also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is for you, a faithful minister of Christ.

[14 : 42] So, he's a faithful minister of Christ on the people's behalf, for them. For them. You know, sometimes, people expect entitlements to come with titles in church.

So, yeah, it should. But, really, okay, let's say, we've made you a minister. But, you are not really faithful to the people you have been assigned to.

And then, you are worried they are not celebrating, putting your name on their status on your birthday. Please think about it.

So, then, don't expect the fact that you are being made a church leader does not mean people will credit you automatically with genuine honor. They might honor you for the office, but really, after church, you are not on their mind.

You are not on their mind. Unless maybe your funny clothes is on their mind or something like that. But, you as a person, for you to be on people's mind and they are, they think about how to reciprocate the gesture of goodness you have done towards them, you have to, your faithfulness must be contextual towards the people.

[16 : 08] Towards the people. So, you don't have to be a leader for people to feel you are actually a faithful person in the assignments you are doing. For someone, all of us should desire that one day someone will say, I decided to join a department because this person has, he doesn't know but I take a lot of inspiration from them.

I take a lot of inspiration. Sometimes, maybe it's an usher. When I get to church, the way he does the ushering, faithfulness in the assignment you have given you.

There are people who expect positions and posts. When they join churches, they expect posts. So, they introduce themselves as, I am a pastor from here.

I am a reverend from here. So, what has that got to do with this? Are you going to be part of this church? Don't introduce yourself as a titled person because it might not be used and you might be offended.

Don't tell us. Let us find out. By virtue of your service and your engagement, don't tell us how long you have been in church. Your father was a pope and you have always been in church.

[17 : 23] Please, that's nice, but let's see it. Let's see it through your service. Bible says that he is a faithful minister of Christ for you.

Let's see how much your work with God is really impacting on a you. On a you. An epiphraes work with God always impacts a certain you.

you can have a cross-section of people whose life have been impacted by an epiphraes. Epiphraes will always show you people. People can say, oh, I am a witness.

Epiphraes has been a blessing to me. And this is why epiphraes has really been epiphraes. An epiphraes will always have definite people, not ghosts, people he has impacted.

Real, real people who can be counted. This one, this one, this one, this one. I pray God will make you an epiphraes. In the name of Jesus. Master, I have been going through a lot this week.

[18 : 24] This epiphraes thing. It will upgrade your service and your service is what will be. Your service in God is what determines your rating in God.

Number five, so on your behalf. Number six. Oh, I like number six. Colossians chapter four, verse 12. So we'll be shuttling between four, verse 12 and 13 and then one.

Colossians 4, 20. Epiphraes, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salute you. Always, always, always laboring fervently.

He's always working. He's always working. When that is locked down, it's not locked down. Always working for the people of God. Always working.

There are some people I feel good for the sake of Carice London, remember them. They're locked down. There's no service. They wouldn't travel. Faithfully, faithfully, faithfully, faithfully.

[19 : 30] Lockdown was a very interesting experience. Being at home and commenting. Some of you too, your comments were so encouraging. Faithfully, every time we see you, please share.

I can't remember. Please share. Please share. Please share. Which was good. Some people were just at like Zoom meetings. Zoom meetings. You're a secret agent.

No one noticed you are there. There are a lot of people. They say, oh, please, try and show your name and your picture. No, no, no, no, no, no. Secret agent. It said, I mean, when Bible is calling somebody faithful, Bible is called faithful minister of Christ, faithful minister to you, that's a very serious, Bible calls somebody faithful.

There are people who are actually faithful. May God give us the grace that we will fall within the category of faithful people. A faithful man who are bound in blessing, that's what the Proverbs chapter 28, 20.

A faithful man shall abound with blessings. Shall abound with blessings. Many pastors who are very faithful tend to be very blessed.

[20 : 50] Yeah. Very faithful pastors tend to be very blessed materially. It tends to be very blessed materially. I know of pastors who said, me, I've signed off salary long time ago and they are so blessed that they don't need, they are giving more and more keeps coming because Bible says that a faithful person, if you are faithful, you shall abound with blessings.

Then somebody who thinks that I have been, I have, I am, I am a professor. I don't even, I don't, I'm a professor. I don't even have this. So he's comparing himself to a pastor.

When you are faithful with what God has called you to do, blessing will never stay away from you.

So it's important to always ask, God, what do you want me to do? God, what do you want me to do?

And you'll be faithful at it. Faithfulness, what it will cost you? Faithful at it. Epaphras, a faithful guy and always, faithful people always labor.

Always labor. Not only once in a while. This one must go to someone who is watching online.

Listen, you have been a Christian long enough.

[22 : 08] You have to be in active service. I don't mean be in church service. I mean, you are serving the people of God. it's necessary.

You have been a Christian. That auntie who always say, I've been a Christian before you were born. I've been a Christian. You have never served anybody. You just go into church service, sit down, oh, this pastor is trying.

This pastor is trying. This one, I like this one. I like this choir blessing. The way he sings. You always run in commentary. But there is no service you bring to the table.

It is not a quality Christian life. It is not a, society will not be able to tell you this. It's not a quality Christian life. It's not a quality Christian life.

And, I used to be a choir star. It's not enough. I used to be active. It's not enough. I used to be a, it's not enough. The ones I don't understand, I used to be a pastor.

[23 : 09] Don't listen to what somebody tells you. Don't listen to a person who tells you I used to be a pastor. I used to be a pastor. I was a pastor. I pastored in this. I mean, I was a pastor. And then they make statements like, I helped this pastor.

I was helping this church when they were starting. I was helping this church. Now I've been to all those churches. So, yeah. Right now, right now, right now. Oh, Paphras, always laboring.

Always. Not once in a while. It's a best person on mobile. Always abounding. Why are you declining? Always abounding. Always abounding.

Stiffle of the middle. Always abounding. Where? In the work of the Lord. You might abound in other things, but make sure you don't decline the work of the Lord. You're abounding with children.

Having more children.

Abounding in marriage. Your marriage is becoming wonderful. Romance is good inside. Abounding in. A lot of people, when they start abounding in career, they start declining in their service in God.

[24 : 10] That is why all this one. A lot of people, the more they are abounding in age, they begin to decline in the work of the Lord. And it's all this one, the young ones will do it.

Yeah. Young ones to do it. Yeah. So any church that is filled with more young people can accomplish more than a church that is filled with a lot of old people.

What are you saying? We need all of them, old and young. But young ones are the foot soldiers. A young person might not have too much commitments.

An old person might have grandchildren who might, they come and leave them with you. Which is also part of the service.

Yeah. Not church service, but you know, part of life. Yeah. As you are abounding in, what I'm trying to say is, as you are abounding in one important thing, make sure you don't decline in the labor, your labor in the Lord.

[25 : 13] Yes. Because it says, always abounding in, always abounding in the work of the Lord. And the only thing that can keep you abounding is that you know that what I'm doing is not in vain.

What I'm doing is not in vain. What I'm doing is not in vain. Sometimes you might not even see the immediate results, but you know it's not in vain. What I'm doing is not in vain.

What I'm doing is not in vain. I see God blessing somebody. Amen. So, Epaphras, always laboring.

Once you go on sabbatical with your labor, some people, after lockdown, you are not laboring anymore.

I know you are not a bad person. No, no, no. Far, really, far beyond it, you are not a bad person. But the truth is, it doesn't occur to you that it's not a good position to be in.

There shouldn't be any justification for your lack of laboring. There shouldn't be any justification.

You used to be doing well as an Epaphras who bewitched you.

[26 : 24] What has happened? Don't feel important in God's house when your labors are very minimal or non-existent. you should always remind yourself, I have to do more for God because the time is coming where what I have done for God is what will speak for me.

The time is coming. Epaphras. Tell somebody, I believe I am an Epaphras. I will be a faithful Epaphras.

Number what? Seven. Four verse twelve again. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, I'll lead you. Always laboring fervently for, you see that, for you.

Here, I'll come back to it. For you in prayers. Listen, the people you don't pray for, you can't really be a blessing match to.

A pastor friend of mine told me something which was such a blessing. He said, yeah, it's actually Pastor David Oedipo, Pastor David Oedipo Jr.

[27 : 38] He said, you know, sometimes when you live in a community and you always have negative things to say about them, God can't use you to bless them. You can't be a blessing to the people you are criticizing.

You see why it's good to have good friends. You can't be a blessing to the people you are criticizing. Oh, this is poor, I like this. This is poor, I like this. This is poor, some pastors, their language, ask for church people.

Church people. Church people are bad. Church people are bad. Listen, you can't be a blessing. Yeah. Ask for people in London. They are proud.

I can't stand them. You can't be a blessing to them. There are people you don't pray for, you can't bless. You will try to minister to, but it will just be performance.

Always laboring in prayer for you. No wonder he has been able to make such an impact on you. You are doing well until all kinds of infiltrations came in and he has, because of his heart for you, it has made a whole apostle in prison to write a letter and today, 2,000 years later, the letter is still valid in Christendom because of Epaphras.

[28 : 55] He prays for you and in his letter he said, this guy is always laboring in prayer for you. I think we should think about this. Who have you prayed for in the church? And some of you who are church leaders, you hardly pray for the church, but you always know what the church must do.

Why have we done it this way? We should have done this. Please, can you pause to examine in your heart how much you are not just, I mention you in prayer, bless this church.

No. It says, laboring, laboring fervently, laboring fervently with intensity for you. How can you, watch this, let me speak to people who are church leaders.

How can you be a valid, credible church leader and you are not praying for the people in the church? You are not praying. Hey, how are you? Good. You move here.

Move here. Look, please. No, no, I'm saying something serious. This team is a spiritual thing. It's not just a social order.

[30 : 04] It's a spiritual thing first. people you don't pray for, you can't impact effectively. You have to pray for, I told, that's why I said, our evangelism team, everybody, you are going for night evangelism.

Sometimes just go for night prayer. Pray over the territory you are evangelizing. He said, this guy is laboring. What gets, what got my attention is the fact that you can labor in prayer.

Labor in prayer where other things have lost importance but this thing you are praying for, you are intense about it. You are intentional about it. You are praying for them. Pray for the choir instead of coming to see the choir and not singing nice songs.

Pray for the host team. That's why I'm saying that nowadays the host team looks very different. Pray.

Pray for people. Pray for Epaphras. You don't have to lead from the front. God's leaders are not usually seen in front, always.

[31 : 16] God's leaders, oh, that means you are not. No, I've been leading from behind the scenes. What I'm doing is not the leadership. I pray for you. This morning, I pray.

Most times, I don't pray for my needs. What are my needs? My needs actually is you do well. That has become my needs. Most of the time because there are so many things I have to pray for and sometimes I mention names.

Most times, I mention names. I mention names. I have to mention your name and mention you to heaven. Mention you to heaven. Then someone says that, you know, so pastor, when pastor said, he declared it, I tapped into it because prayer had gone on for that person before.

This prayer has gone on. Pastor, pray. Church leader, pray for the people you are leading. You don't have authority from heaven to lead people you are not praying for.

Pray. Let's pray for people and let's move this thing just from the mundane natural realm. Move church work just from the natural realm and we have become just natural and just organizational.

[32 : 33] It's important. Organizational is important. But as I was telling on Thursday, we are first an organism before we become an organization. So the organic aspect of church life requires prayer.

We need to pray for people. Look at someone and tell the person, please don't forget to say one for me. Today my message is...

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